



North East region: puppy raising update February 2025

Hi All, Janet Champion here, and I am the Puppy Raising Operations Manager for the North East

Puppy Raising Operations Manager message

This year we're really bringing the focus onto the basics with our puppies and ensuring there is greater consistency with getting the foundations right. Afterall, having a solid foundation makes it easier to build upon with puppy raising behaviours.

If you have a puppy who will sit when you ask him/her to sit, in all situations, then this is a really an amazing management tool to support you with whatever you may encounter. Equally, if your puppy doesn't respond to a "sit" cue or recall on-lead prior to being released for an off-lead session, it's unlikely they will respond to being recalled once they're off-lead, so always practice this as part of your routine prior to releasing your puppy.

If you bring positional cues/obedience into many routines and are consistent from an early age, it will be what your puppy expects to do moving forward.

Your Puppy Development Advisor will be able to give you exercises to develop and progress. A fantastic example of this is a relaxation protocol which builds up day by day and develops on behaviours your puppy has already learned, to support managing frustration and distractions and improving focus on their puppy raiser.

Many puppies, when going through adolescence will push the boundaries and it may feel they have forgotten everything you have worked through previously. We had an example of this with a big male Labrador who was becoming very difficult for his puppy raiser to manage. The simple fact of introducing consistent door manners every single time the puppy went through a door on a lead, including back into the house at the end of a walk

(how many of us forget that one?), as well as patience when getting in or out of the car, supported this puppy to feel confident in those behaviours. They would ultimately gain a reward and found these behaviours being positively reinforced helped the puppy to refocus back on his puppy raiser, including in many other situations, enabling the puppy to stay with the puppy raiser until he was ready to move into training. The puppy raiser gained great confidence from their achievements and went on to raise another puppy.

Every quarter (three months), the team will focus on certain aspects of the basics. This quarter, we are looking specifically at settling and you may hear your Puppy Development Advisor talk about “micro settles”, which are a great way to start off your pup’s ability to settle and watch the world go by prior to longer and more challenging settles needed in cafes and restaurants. If you are walking past a bench in a shopping centre or on a pavement, take the opportunity to ask your pup to sit beside you, only for a minute or so to start with, and have a short break on the bench yourself before moving on at a time whilst your puppy is still relaxed and taking in the environment around it.

Finally, whilst we are talking about back to basics, don’t forget to give your puppy the chance to toilet in its usual spending area (if setting off from home), or in a safe appropriate place on the lead when out and about, before you start a walk. Ideally, we try to reduce the number of times your puppy relieves itself on a walk and the easiest way to tackle this is to always give them the opportunity to toilet first. You may need to do this before you show any signs of a walk being planned. For example, putting on your jacket etc to minimise the chance your puppy is anticipating what comes next so not focusing on the “busy busy” cue.

Puppy Development Supervisor update

I would just like to take the opportunity to let you know that we now have Puppy Development Supervisor, Kay McGuire, back from her maternity leave and she has quickly settled back into the role which has been looked after for her by David Bailey for the past year. David leaves the department on



Tuesday 25 March, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for his contribution to puppy raising in the North East, which has been very much appreciated.

‘Transition into training’ virtual session

If you have a puppy over 10 months old, you will have received an invitation to the next ‘Transition into training’ call on Monday 3 March at 10:00am. If you have a puppy of this age and have not received an invite, please contact your Puppy Development Advisor (via Guide Line on 0800 78 11 444) for the virtual link.

Thank you for all you are doing and look forward to seeing you all soon,
Janet.

Janet Champion

Puppy Raising Operations Manager - North East and Scotland & Northern Ireland Regions

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